

# Hartford Restaurant Group D 2B

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Good Afternoon. My name is Philip Barnett and I am the Chairman of the CT Restaurant Association and one of the owners of The Hartford Restaurant Group which consists of the **7 Wood-n-Taps** (located in: Hartford, Farmington, Southington, Rocky Hill, Vernon, Orange & Wallingford), **Agave Grill** (Downtown Hartford) and **TD Homers Grill** (Southington).

As a person that has been working in the hospitality industry for the past 22 years and being self employed for the past 14 years, I am asking for you to support HB 6405 "An act concerning barroom partitions" as I believe the current law needs to be updated to meet the current market demands. I have been involved with the design and layout of 12 different establishments over the past 15 years and I believe having this flexibility would be very beneficial to our guests and design team. The current challenge with the law is that it does NOT allow some adults (18 years of age – 20 years of age) the ability to dine at an establishment without the presence of a parent or guardian if there is alcohol being served and there isn't a restaurant permit. The current law requires a 4' partition between the barroom and any dining room or hallway for a restaurant permit.

Agave Grill is a great example of this. Agave has a café permit because there is not a 4' separation between the bar and hallway to the restrooms. This creates a challenge for Agave because under the current law Agave is not allowed to have anyone under the age of 21 in the establishment if they are not accompanied by a parent or guardian. Although the dining area is near the bar, they are designed differently and any person in either area has to provide valid identification before ordering alcohol. Although our primary demographics are from the age of 25-50, it hurts me as a business owner to turn away an 18-20 year old couple or group of friends who comes in on a dinner date or before a local performance because they have to walk on the side of the bar area to use the bathroom. With the struggling economy, it hurts to turn business away because of a stipulations within the permit. I ask that you support HB 6405 to allow the hospitality industry of CT to meet the current market.

Kindly submitted,

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